



**Department of
Early Education and Care**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



Thomas L. Weber, Commissioner

**EEC Board Committee
Planning and Evaluation**

Thursday November 7, 2013
10:00am-1:00pm

Department of Early Education and Care
51 Sleeper St. 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02210

AGENDA

Members of the Committee Present

Tom Weber, EEC Commissioner (Ex-Officio)
Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, Committee Chairperson
Joni Block, Board Member
Cheryl Stanley, Board Member (by phone)

EEC Staff Present

Jennifer Amaya Thompson, Head Start State Collaboration Director
Tan Gopal, CIO

Guests/Board Members

Members of the Public

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am.

Welcome and Introductions

Committee members were welcomed to the meeting.

Routine Business:

Minutes

Members had an opportunity to review the minutes. No changes were necessary for the October 3 minutes.

Disclosures

Committee Chair Eleonora Villegas-Reimers disclosed that she works for Wheelock College which is a recipient of EEC grant funds.

Board Member Joni Block disclosed that she works for Brockton Public Schools which is a recipient of EEC grant funds.

New Business and Commissioner/Committee Updates

- **WIDA**

EEC Head Start State Collaboration Director Jennifer Amaya Thompson provided an update on the WIDA project. WIDA will be presenting at the Board Meeting next week. Board member Joni Block commented that she appreciates that Ms. Amaya Thompson has been forthright asking questions of WIDA.

Ms. Amaya Thompson provided the Committee with a copy of the final scope of work for the next phase of the partnership with WIDA. She noted that funding will be allocated in a period of 6 months thus there will be an evaluation at the end of each period. The scope of work provides specific information about what is expected and outlines the activities the group will be responsible for. The final product will have 3 target audiences: educators from EEC, ESE and DHE, families and children.

Ms. Amaya Thompson also noted the standards will be translated in to 5 languages. The languages will be Spanish, Haitian-Creole, Portuguese, Mandarin and Vietnamese. There will also be a series of brochures that will be translated into these five languages.

Board member Joni Block noted that it's important when standards (prek and k standards, STEM) are talked about that the WIDA standards are included in the conversation. In addition, when training occurs it is important to coordinate trainings with both EPS grantees and CFCE grantees.

Ms. Amaya Thompson provided a copy of the presentation that will be presented by herself and people from WIDA at the Board meeting next week. She walked the Committee through the presentation. Board member Joni Block felt that the evaluation discussed in the presentation should be both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Ms. Amaya Thompson noted that the vote at the Board meeting will be a vote to adopt the work of WIDA as guidelines. Board Member Cheryl Stanley noted that it will be important to differentiate between standards and guidelines and why EEC is adopting them as guidelines rather than standards. Ms. Amaya Thompson shared the definitions from WIDA of standards and guidelines. A guideline instruction that shows or tells how something should be done OR an indication or outline of policy or conduct. A standard is something set up and established by an authority as a rule for the measure of quality. Standards define curriculum, monitor learner achievement and is a check for accountability.

Lastly, Ms. Amaya Thompson then provided a copy of the Implementation plan that WIDA developed for ESE. WIDA will be developing a similar plan for EEC.

- **Standards Revision**

After a discussion with JD, it was determined that the revision of the Early Childhood Standards will fall to this Committee.

The Committee questioned what the Committee is charged with related to the revision of the standards. It was agreed upon that at the next meeting or in January, a representative from the policy unit will provide the committee with an update on where the standards revision is currently and the plan for revising the standards.

- **OPRE Research Partnership Grant with Brandeis**

Brandeis in partnership with EEC submitted a grant to OPRE in July for the Research Partnership Grant. At the

end of September Brandeis was notified that they were awarded the grant. The grant is for 4 years.

The project presents an evaluation of policy and administrative changes in Massachusetts designed to make the process of accessing and maintaining child care subsidies more user- friendly.

The project will evaluate a recent policy change that transitioned the location and responsibilities for child care voucher eligibility reassessment from regional Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) centers to contracted child care providers. Enacted in 2012, this change applied only to income-eligible families receiving vouchers who are not participating in the TANF or child welfare systems.

The study is designed to: (i) evaluate the impacts of the reform on key policy outcomes, including voucher continuity and stability of care; (ii) identify the specific mechanisms producing these effects, (iii) document policy implementation and fidelity to the new model, and (iv) examine effects on providers and families, with a focus on providers in low resource areas and families who traditionally under-participate.

Research Questions.

- *Policy implementation:* What were the components of the voucher eligibility reassessment model before the policy change and how did this change? Was the new model delivered as intended? How did providers and families experience the policy change (e.g. changes in paperwork, location) Are there process measures such as waiting time for reassessment appointments that can be measured and tested in the impact study?
- *Policy impacts:* What are the impacts of the policy change on the continuity of voucher receipt and child care arrangements? How does implementation variation (if any) help to explain results?
- *Pathways of impact:* What aspects of the policy change explain any observed policy impacts? Is the location change (reduction in travel time to eligibility reassessment) the primary driver?
- *Sub-group analysis:* Are there variations in the impacts of the policy by selected focal sub-groups, including Hispanic families and families living in suburban vs. urban areas, areas with high vs. low immigrant families, or in different CCR&R regions?

Commissioner's Evaluation

In past years, the Planning and Evaluation Committee has conducted the Commissioner's Evaluation in February each year. With a new Commissioner officially appointed in September, the Committee discussed whether the evaluation will continue to occur in February/March (a year after the current Commissioner joined the Department as Interim) or will it continue to be an annual review and occur a year after Commissioner Weber's official appointment.

Committee Chair Eleonora Villegas-Reimers will ask Board Chair JD Chesloff if the evaluation will originate from this Committee and if so, when the evaluation should take place.

If this Committee will be charged with the evaluation, the Committee will request from EEC Human Resources Director Sarah Harding a copy of a completed evaluation.

Meeting Schedule Change

Committee Chair Eleonora Villegas-Reimers asked for changes to two of the Committee meeting dates. The

Committee rescheduled these meetings as well as one other. The new schedule will be re-circulated to the Board and Committee. The new meetings dates are February 6, April 3, and May 8 from 10am-1pm.

Discussion

Strategic Plan

(Materials- none)

Committee Chair Eleonora Villegas-Reimers described to the Committee her process of developing the first draft of the strategic plan. She noted she copied the sections titled Guide to Strategic Plan, EEC Mission and Practical Five-Year Vision from the 2009 Strategic Plan.

The Committee decided to start the discussion with the Practical Five- Year Vision as all members were in agreement about the first two sections. Committee Chair Eleonora Villegas-Reimers suggested changing the title from Practical Five-Year Vision to EEC Vision. The Committee went through each bullet point under this section and made some minor wording changes to bullets 2, 3, and 7.

The Committee continued through the document reviewing the Strategic Directions section. The Committee agreed that throughout the document when referring to the K-12 system it should be clarified that it is the K-12 education system. The three strategic directions/five year goals are as follows:

1. All young children in the Commonwealth will be ready to enter the K-12 education system and be successful.
2. Programs offered in early childhood, out of school, and residential settings under the supervision of the EEC will promote and support the education and healthy development of children so that all children are ready to be successful school members and citizens.
3. The early childhood and out of school workforce who works with children and families in the Commonwealth is professional prepared, adequately compensated, and diverse.

Each of the above goals will have supporting goals/indicators organized in the following four groups:

- a. Quality
- b. Access
- c. Communication and Advocacy
- d. Infra-structure and finance

The Committee discussed whether a definition is needed for each supporting goal/indicator. It was agreed that each would be defined under each goal.

The Committee also discussed the use of the term programs and if it is inclusive enough to describe all the early childhood, out of school, residential and placement agencies as well as the materials and resources that EEC provides.

The Committee began reviewing the supporting goals/indicators under each main goal. The Committee made some wording changes to the bullets under the supporting goals/indicators.

The Committee completed the first review of the first two goals during this meeting and added a fourth goal which stated; The Department and the Board of Early Education will provide leadership, direction and resources in meeting the mission of the agency with utmost integrity, transparency, and accountability to the people of the Commonwealth.

Details of all the changes are being compiled into a second draft and will be distributed to the Committee. At the

next Committee meeting, the Committee will continue reviewing the document and Goals 3 and 4 as well as return to the discussion of the values described in the 2009 strategic plan.

Lastly, the Committee discussed what would be presented at next week's Board meeting regarding the Committee update. Committee Chair Eleonora Villegas-Reimers will present the 3 goals plus the new 4th goal to the Board and inform them the Committee is continuing to work on the supporting goals/indicators. In addition, it was suggested that the document be presented at the Advisory Council. Since, the document has not been fully reviewed and vetted through the Committee; it will not go to the Advisory Council in November but possibly in December.

The next meeting of the Planning and Evaluation Committee is December 5 from 10-1.

Possible Agenda items:

- Strategic Plan
- Standards Revision- Update

The Committee adjourned at 1:00 pm.